

Sclerotherapy is a minimally invasive treatment for varicose veins and spider veins. Sclerotherapy uses an injection of a special chemical (sclerosant) into a varicose vein to damage and scar the inside lining of the vein. This causes the vein to close.

Source: my.clevelandclinic.org | veinvascularcentre.squarespace.com

What Is Sclerotherapy?

Spider veins are tiny red and purple vessels found most commonly on the thighs or lower legs. Sclerotherapy is used to treat these small superficial veins by injecting a sclerosing agent with a very small needle causing the vein to be irritated, and to damage and scar the inside lining of the vein. This causes the vein to close.

Are there any alternative treatments available?

Spider veins (telangiectasia) are very common. They are usually not associated with any underlying abnormality of the main veins and usually do not cause symptoms or complications. It is thus quite safe to opt to have no treatment at all.

The choice of treatment depends on the size and depth of the spider veins. Most blue/purple spider veins are treated with sclerotherapy. The smaller red, very fine spider veins can be treated with laser.

What are the treatment sessions like?

We recommend you bring a pair of shorts with you to wear during the treatment session. The doctor will examine you and mark the veins that will be treated. The area will be cleansed before injecting a sclerosing agent into the vein making it swell and close.

You might feel a burning sensation when the solution is injected but it stops in a

few seconds. The needle is withdrawn, and pressure is applied to the area. A pad or cotton wool is applied to each site. The leg is bandaged before you go home.

How Long is the Treatment Session?

The session lasts approximately 30 minutes. Please arrive at least 10 minutes before your scheduled appointment. It takes 10 minutes to apply the bandage at the end of procedure. After the treatment session, you will be asked to walk around for 15 to 20 minutes before leaving.

What is the sclerosing agent used?

Sodium tetradecyl sulfate (Fibrovein) is a detergent type sclerosing agent.

What are the specific risks related to this procedure?

1. Light brown discoloration of the skin may develop along the vein in the area injected. Approximately 20-30% of patients treated note the discoloration, which is lighter and less obvious than the vein being treated. The hyperpigmentation usually fades in a couple weeks but may take several months to a year to totally resolve. There is a 1% incidence of hyperpigmentation continuing after one year. A small amount of blood may become trapped and hardened in the vein when injecting varicose veins or some "spider" vein complexes. This may feel like a knot or cord, and it may

look dark blue or bruised. This is a common occurrence. You may need to return before your next treatment so this area can be drained to remove the trapped blood. This will reduce the hyperpigmentation that can occur. The chance of this occurring can be decreased with proper compression of the vein and use of compression hose after your treatment.

2. Telangiectatic Matting – the formation of new, fine "spider" veins in the area injected occurs in approximately 10% of patients injected. The exact reason for this occurring is unknown. If untreated, the matting usually resolves in three to twelve months, but very rarely it can be permanent. If the matting does not face it can be re-injected or treated with a laser/light source.
3. Bruising is common and typically resolves over a few days to weeks.
4. Blistering, redness, itching, irritation, swelling or pain can occur, but are usually temporary.
5. Infection is very rare.
6. Ulceration and scarring occur rarely.
7. Allergic reactions are rare. The range in severity from mild to life-threatening reactions.
8. Inflammation around the vein can occur (superficial thrombophlebitis). This may be tender but generally resolves with treatment. Tenderness, bruising or firmness in the treated area can occur and may be long-lasting but rarely permanent.
9. Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is a potential complication, in patients who are susceptible to blood clots.
10. An arterial injection can occur very rarely. Consequences range from discomfort, scarring of the skin, injury to muscle or nerves or other tissue, or loss of limb.

Before you agree to the procedure make sure you know:

- The name of the procedure
- The reason you are having the procedure
- What results to expect and what they mean
- The risks and benefits of the procedure
- What the possible side effects or complications are
- When and where you are to have the procedure
- Who will do procedure and what that person's qualifications are
- What would happen if you did not have the procedure
- Any alternative procedures to think about
- Who to call after the procedure if you have questions or problems
- How much will you have to pay for the procedure

Who Cannot Have this Procedure

- Active deep vein thrombosis or superficial vein thrombosis
- Pregnant and breast-feeding mothers
- Hypersensitivity to Fibrovenin
- Very immobile patients
- Inability to tolerate compression stockings

What do I need to do before the Procedure?

You will have been measured for compression stockings at your consultation. If you have your own stockings, please bring them with you.

Wear a skirt or loose-fitting slacks to the office on the day of the treatment and bring a pair of shorts to wear during your procedure.

Please DO NOT moisturize your legs the night before or the day of your treatment. Please refrain from tanning or sunbathing 1 week prior to treatment.

Local anaesthetic cream (EMLA) will be prescribed. This needs to be applied to the skin over any area that will potentially be injected at least 1 hour before the procedure. Wrapping the leg with clingwrap after applying the cream often makes it more effective. Before your sclerotherapy treatment, you should avoid certain medications.

Please inform your doctor if you are taking the following:

- Antibiotics such as *tetracycline* or *minocycline* may make your skin stain if you take them seven to 10 days before or after sclerotherapy.
- Don't take *aspirin*, *ibuprofen* (or other anti-inflammatory medications for 48 hours before and after sclerotherapy. These medicines may get in the way of the action of the sclerosing agent or make you

bleed more. It's ok to take paracetamol.

- *Prednisone*: makes the sclerosing agent less effective.

What should I do after I go home?

There is really no recovery period after the treatments. It is recommended that you avoid strenuous activity for a couple of days after each treatment.

The bandage can be removed after 24 hours. You can have a shower or bath. We recommend you avoid hot baths or showers as heat dilates your blood vessels. The stocking needs to be worn day and night for 7 days. You cannot have sclerotherapy if you are not able to wear a stocking. If you develop skin discoloration after the treatments, we recommend you apply sun block until the discoloration has resolved.

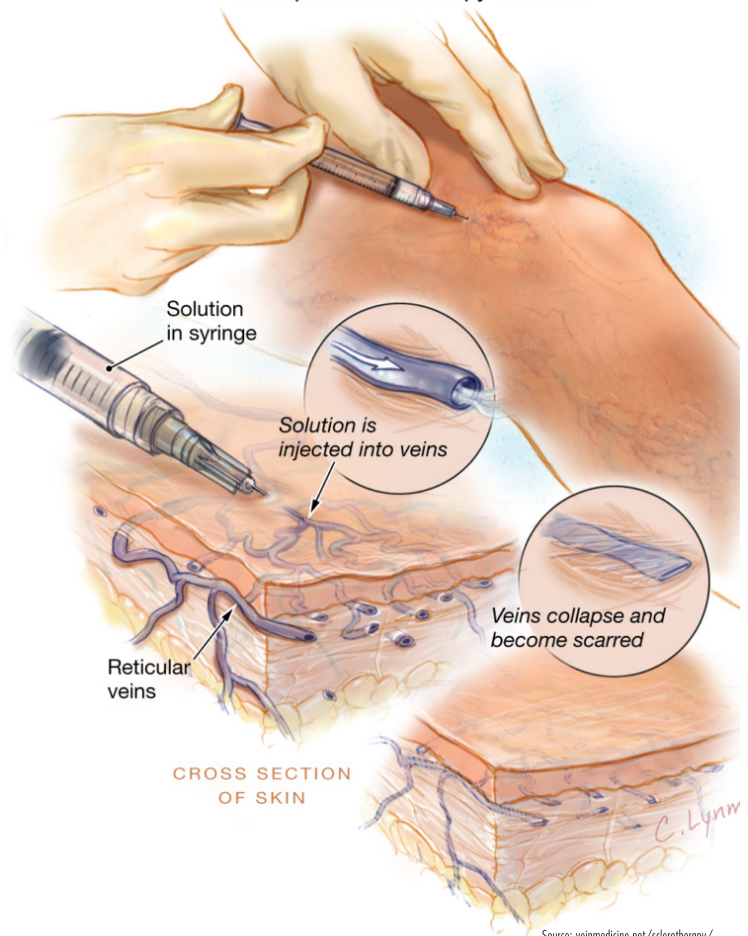
There are no driving restrictions, but if your drive home is more than one hour, we recommend you stop and stretch your legs. If your employment situation requires long periods of sitting, we recommend you take short walking breaks every couple of hours. We recommend paracetamol instead of aspirin or ibuprofen related products to avoid bruising.

What To Expect:

Photographs will be taken before treatment is initiated. This helps to monitor your progress. Your legs will look worse before they look better. After the vein is damaged the body needs time to heal.

Most people will notice a dramatic improvement approximately six weeks after their initial treatment. Maximal improvement often takes several months and several treatments.

Example of sclerotherapy treatment



Source: veinmedicine.net/sclerotherapy/


There is no guarantee sclerotherapy will be effective in every case. Patients can expect a 60-70% improvement in the appearance after 6-7 sessions.

Some veins and areas will need to be retreated. Recurrence of the same vein treated rarely occurs with proper injection technique and compliance with post treatment instructions.

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What About Payment?

The procedure and its associated costs will have been discussed with you, and a quote provided. Where procedures need to be unexpectedly altered during the procedure, the fee may change. Similarly, emergency procedures may incur an additional cost. Surgeons are highly trained, highly skilled professionals and throughout your care a member of the practice is available to attend to you 24 hours a day. In return we expect prompt payment of your account. Although accounts may be submitted to the medical aid, the patient is responsible for payment.